



# THE WAKE

fortnightly student magazine

volume 23 - issue 9



On Being (Oneself)

The Challenge

A Laughing Matter

p. 8 I Accept my Mistakes

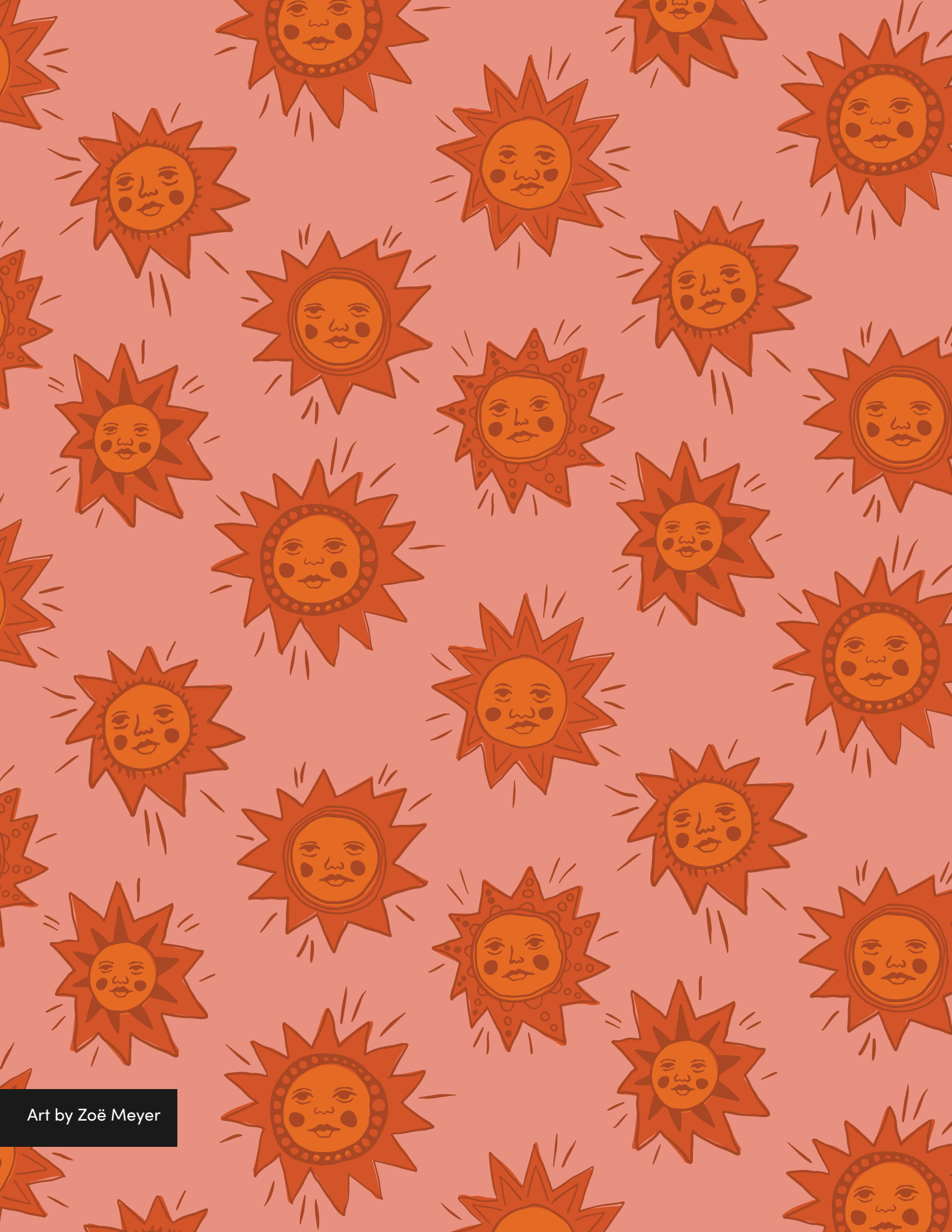
p. 9 Gatekeeping Our Lives

p. 14 Q & A with Brother Bird

p. 16

p. 17

p. 20



Art by Zoë Meyer



# THE WAKE

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VOLUME 23, ISSUE 9

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<b>Copy Interns</b>	Hana Handzija
<b>Cities Intern</b>	Gabriel Matias Castilho
<b>Reviews Intern</b>	Amina Ahmed

## WRITERS

<b>This Issue</b>
George Faseemo, Quinn McClurg, Jason Chang, Jaywalker, Lauren Facente, Gabriel Matias Castilho, Gecao, Yve Spengler, Amina Ahmed, Jacob Nelson, Ashley Sudeta, Shanna Sivakumar, Jacob Dommer, and Marie Ronnander
<b>Feature</b>
Alessandra Benitez

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Established in 2002, The Wake is a fortnightly independent magazine and registered student organization produced by and for students at the University of Minnesota.

The Wake was founded by Chrin Ruen & James DeLong.

Disclaimer: The purpose of The Wake is to provide a forum in which students can voice their opinions. Opinions expressed in the magazine are not representative of the publication or university as a whole. To join the conversation email [eic@wakemag.org](mailto:eic@wakemag.org).

## PRODUCTION

<b>Executive Director</b>	Marie Ronnander
<b>Creative Director</b>	Zoë Meyer
<b>Publishing Manager</b>	Quinn McClurg
<b>Finance Manager</b>	Andrew Palik
<b>PR/Ad Manager</b>	Clare Sokolski
<b>Social Media Manager</b>	Caroline Ray
<b>Website Manager</b>	Brennan Neuser
<b>Distribution Manager</b>	Sid Bommareddy
<b>Art Director</b>	Alex Kozak
<b>Designers</b>	Sana Ikramuddin
	Kirsten Rud
<b>Art Interns</b>	Jacob Nelson
	Nora Hitchcock
	Sana Ikramuddin
	Tessa Johansen
<b>Social Media Intern</b>	Hillary Pham

## ARTISTS

<b>Art</b>
1 Alex Kozak 2 Sana Ikramuddin 3 Nora Hitchcock 4 Jacob Nelson
5 Kirsten Rud 6 Marie Ronnander

<b>Creative Submissions</b>
Cheech B, Zoë Meyer and Amina Ahmed

<b>Cover and Feature Art</b>
Tessa Johansen

*One Day, Lisa Frankentien, South Africa, Stardust, Loss of Life, Madame Web from original sources*

Like to do art, poetry or anything creative ?

### Send it to us!

We are looking for more creative submissions! Art, poetry, DIY coloring pages, photography or anything else you want to submit. Email [art@wakemag.org](mailto:art@wakemag.org) for any of your fun and/or freaky submissions :)

The Wake Student Magazine  
126 Coffman Memorial Union  
300 Washington Avenue SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55455





wink! one page magazine

# Boycott Buddy

Need help finding alternatives to BSD boycotted businesses. Want to not put your money towards a genocide? The Wake has made a list of alternatives keep the boycott in full swing.

## Out

Starbucks - - - - -

McDonalds, Pizza Hut, Papa Johns, Burger King, Dominos

Disney, Amazon, WIX, Air BnB

## In

\*Mims Cafe (St Paul), Bordertown Coffee (East Bank), Up Coffee (Como)

\*Babas (Uptown), Alma (Marcy Holmes), \*Walleys (Dinkytown), and Mesa Pizza (Dinkytown)

See our cool fun events list on the next page :)

\*Palestinian Owned

## INSIDE

- 6 Communication is Woven in the Fabric
- 6 Does Speaking Another Language Make you “Speacial”?
- 7 Bursting the Academic Bubble
- 8 On Being (Oneself)
- 9 Under the Sound and Under the Influence
- 9 The Challenge
- 12 The Climate Crisis and Migration to the Midwest
- 14 A Laughing Matter
- 15 There’s and Uneven Bob Underneath my Hijab
- 15 Cybernatically Made
- 16 I accept my Mistakes
- 16 Lives to be Lived
- 17 Oscillation
- 17 Gatekeeping our Lives
- 20 Six Reviews
- 20 Q & A with Brother Bird

## UPCOMING EVENTS

MAR 22

### TEXTURE FREQ SAVES

Texture Freq kicks off its nationwide tour with its iconic, “bizarro” hardcore punk prowess, featuring “NEW SONGS NEW MERCH NEW NOISE.” Add to your cassette collection, break a bone, breathe in that musty basement air.

Disgraceland (ask a punk)  
7PM and 10\$\*  
\*NOTAFLOF

MAR 24

### MINNEAPOLIS VINTAGE MARKET

Two-tiered and terrifically trodden, vendors at the Machine Shop will stock your shelves adorn your aesthetic. Add to this equation a pop-up coffee shop and DJ Buster Baxter, and you’ll be having a thrifty day out to the max-er.

Machine Shop  
11 AM – 4 PM; \$10 (free admission after 12 PM)

MAR 29

### EARLY EYES

Riffy, indie, and atmospheric, this Fine Line show of Minneapolis-based acts will put you exactly where you need to be, whether it’s in tears or the fetal position. That is, until Anita blows the amps out. This will be a night of catharsis, soft joy, and raw emotion.

Fine Line  
7:30 PM; \$18-\$22

MAR 30

### GIMME GIMME DISCO

Love ABBA? The Bee Gees? Incredibly crowded rooms? Gimme Gimme Disco is for you! It’s a DJ dance party set to the tempo of disco! The tune of swoon! The beat of heat! Dressing up as ridiculous as possible is strongly encouraged.

First Avenue  
8PM; \$25

APR 6

### “ONCE UPON A [ROLLER] DERBY”

Blockers, jammers, and skaters, oh my! It’s the prime season for everyone’s favorite, most confusing, full-contact roller skate sport, this time hosted by North Star Roller Derby with a fairy tale theme. Featuring the Bangers, the Kilmores, and more, it sure will be a skating spectacle.

Canterbury Expo Center, Shakopee  
6 PM; \$15.

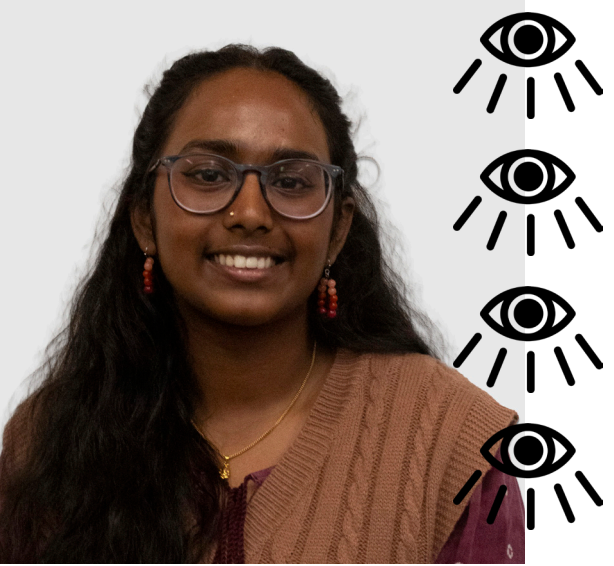
APR 6

### VIAL “BURNOUT TOUR” FEAT. KILLUSONLINE

Archetypal indie punk? Riot grrrl? Right here? On our campus? Joined by killusonline, the local hip-hop hard-core legend, prepare for a night of genre-defying, angst-ridden riffs. Just for one night, the Whole will reconnect to its revolutionary (and remarkably grimy) roots.

The Whole Music Club  
7:30 PM; \$5-\$10.





# Letter from the Online Editor

Dear Reader,

I accepted that I wasn’t going to thrive in college when I started. I still childishly held out hope for finding a new exciting group of friends, starting a romance with a decided expiration date, graduating with honors, traveling the world, hitting the clubs, or even just getting to know myself better throughout this process. I knew it wasn’t in the cards for me, but I wanted the universe to prove me wrong. Read the following in a cliché, masochistic, self aware tone: But I’m always right. At the end of it all, I feel exhausted to the bone, unsatisfied with my “accomplishments,” filled with regret, and still melancholic. I keep rifling through my mean, demented brain, trying to find a glimmer of hope or a memory of contentment but I can’t continue to. I’m just too tired. I realize this is an intense start to a letter that is supposed to make you want to read the rest of this issue. But, stick with me.

As I was oversharing before, it’s been a rough couple of years. I’ve fallen innumerable times, so hard sometimes that I feared I wouldn’t be able to stand up again. But here I am almost at the end. Despite all the trials and tribulations, I’m glad I was able to see college through. And creating art was key to my survival. I am not a consistent artist, but I’ve realized that I am a persistent one. I find a sketch of a tomato waiting for its highlight, a crochet sweater that lacks ribbing, a clay jewelry dish that needs a glaze, and my dance sari sitting patiently in my closet knowing I will return. Trite as it may be, art brings joy. Even if it is only temporary. I haven’t lived enough to understand how “it” goes. But I know that my “it” cannot prolong without my connection to the arts.

Writing and editing for the wake has fed my creativity and has been a lifeline throughout these four years. The best part about the wake has been the freedom to write whatever my heart desires. I wrote An article romanticizing my ideal morning routine and getting to play with my narrative voice and I’ve written articles that enumerate my rage about straight people colonizing queer spaces and I’ve written articles where self reflection and vulnerability were placed on center stage. Moreover, I’ve had the privilege of editing and sculpting some incredible writing that has graced the pages of this magazine. And last, but definitely not least, I’m so grateful to have worked with some of the coolest people here at the wake. I will miss the wonderfully bizarre staff presentations, the ingenious weekly wake question, and Vern, our copy editing intern, who always has the most intriguing anecdotes.

I’m writing this letter after a crappy morning and reading it back I realize the change in tone. I started with pessimism and a “woe is me” attitude and as I transitioned into writing about the wake, I see a grateful and nostalgic tone pervade my voice. Simply writing this letter has turned my day around as writing and editing for the wake has turned my life around these past four years.

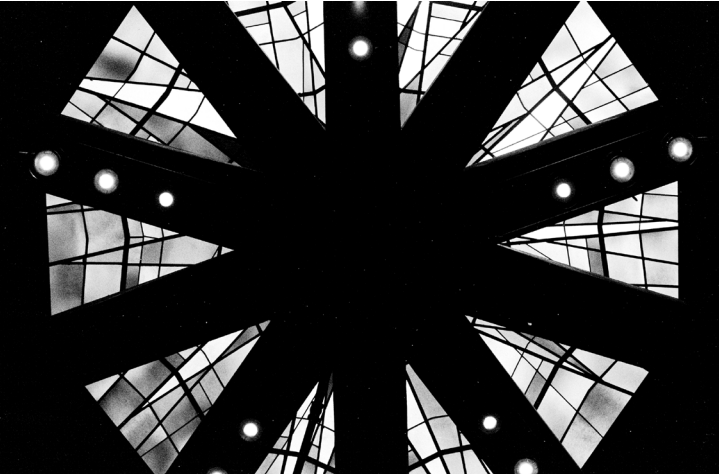
Yours,

Vishalli Alagappan  
Online Editor

## Hidden Peace

Waiting for those willing to seek it out.

*BY CHEECH B*



Nestled within the University of Minnesota’s campus, there lies a hidden sanctuary—an unassuming meditation room, tucked away from the turbulent pace of Washington Ave.

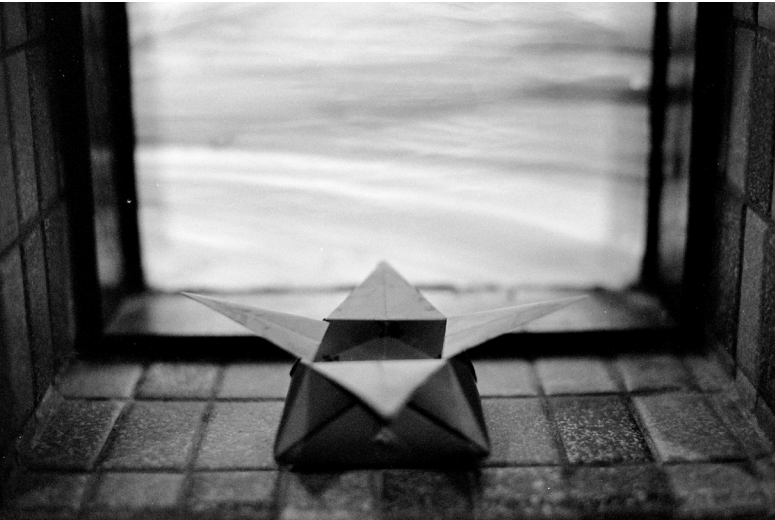
What immediately captures attention is the stained glass ceiling and walls, a stunning display of vibrant colors. As sunlight streams through, it casts a mesmerizing array of hues, creating a captivating interplay of light and shadow throughout the room.

The only decor is a framed drawing of a shell above a small table with a standing bell.

Here, you can find respite from the demands of academia and the pressures of everyday life.

It’s a space where stress dissipates, and a sense of inner peace becomes tangible.

Tangible to those willing to walk a different path, to venture into unknown territory alone and spend time with themselves.





# Communication is Woven in the Fabric

Flagging is here to stay

BY ASHLEY SUDETA

“Do I look gay?” is the new small talk between my roommates and I. The foundation established after freshman year has allowed us to branch out socially, spurring the question “Do I read as queer?”.

Time, politics, and what every professor calls “the advent of the internet” have changed how queerness is communicated. However, nonverbal methods have long reigned supreme for their ability to convey what cannot be spoken freely. “Flagging” describes the wordless forms of communication—usually worn clothing or accessories—used to convey one’s queer identity or sexual preferences.

In widely known examples, a ring of keys on a beltloop could indicate that someone was lesbian, or a piercing in the right ear could signify that a man was gay. However, the most iconic usage of flagging is the Hanky Code, a practice originated in the 1970s that uses colored handkerchiefs in back pockets to indicate sexual preferences, usually for cruising. The color of handkerchief and pocket side communicated the sexual activities they were looking to partake in. When people refer to “flagging,” nine times out of ten they’re talking about Hanky Code, so I recommend further research if you’re interested. Just basic knowledge of it will give you a clearer perspective of queer history and its intersection with kink.

Flagging isn’t just for the history books though, there are reasons for its preservation. Queer communication remains crucial, especially amid rampant sanitization and exclusionary attitudes towards BIPOC and trans people. The right to community, genuine expression, or sexual freedom shouldn’t hinge on societal acceptance. Although, one may argue that nobody would bother to notice flagging’s small details, there’s nothing small about queer culture and connection. Meanwhile, interactions among my roommates are starting to resemble “The Matrix.” “You go out like that, you’ll look straight, but if you take the ring of keys, you’ll meet women.” Choose wisely.👁



# Does Speaking Another Language Make You “Special” ?

The “special” and the struggle of being an international student

BY GECAO

The word “special” for me can be positive, but also can be negative. As international students, the language barrier is a common problem for us. We need to spend twice or triple the time on the same work.

Taking myself as an example: in my current psychology class, we were assigned a New York Times podcast that was more than an hour long. For local students, I imagine podcasts can be a reward, probably using them as soundtracks on a warm morning, lying on a cozy couch, sipping coffee. It seems pretty chill and joyous. But for me, it is the exact opposite. It’s time-consuming, because the podcast speed is really fast and uses verbiage that’s very specific and colloquial. I have to slow down and listen word by word, carefully and slowly. I burn out every time I hear it.

Language barriers make me feel like I lose my sense of belonging, making me feel less confident and lonely in an academic setting and further away from home. But, in a positive way, I do feel special. It’s like a video game and I am the heroic main character in this journey. I overcame all difficulties and came to America alone. There is a funny saying that International students are acting as father and mother, as well as students and kids. They take care of themselves—cooking and cleaning for themselves like moms, fixing things that are broken in the house like dads, and going to school every day as students.

Also, learning a new language means learning the culture behind it. It’s funny to see that sometimes people have somewhat different personalities when they switch to another language they share. When I speak English, I feel like a Wall Street elite, always talking about tens-of-millions-of-dollars projects, so confident and charismatic! I enjoy the mingling and clashing of cultures too, like the Chinese towns in America and Chinese New Year in college. Every time I get compliments from people saying: “Wow! Your English is really good, like a native speaker.” I feel proud, especially when I introduce my country’s culture and history in other languages like English.👁

# Bursting the Academic Bubble

The thing about design education no one tells you about.

BY JACOB DOMMER

In early 2021, before I was anything I am now, I have a love-hate relationship with academia. The longer I stay here, the more respect I have for the network of professors and the dedicated resources at our disposal. Never again will I find myself in another community of lifelong learners genuinely interested in supporting each other’s personal development. At the same time, the more involved I become on campus, the less patience I have for academia’s hypocrisy in the face of change – a stubborn allegiance to upholding outdated modes of learning under the guise of academic exploration.

This time of year, the students at the College of Design are entering the second half of the spring semester. That means gearing up for another marathon of all-nighters, vague expectations, and improvisational presentations. Now approaching graduation, students are seething with disillusionment as they reckon with the gross disconnect between academia and the “real world.” Rumor has it, if you listen close enough, you can hear the ghosts of generations of design students that came before us, murmuring in the courtyard of Rapson Hall after dark, still mourning the unkept promise of a work-life balance.

For anyone who doesn’t already know, design programs, particularly architecture, are infamous for functioning more like a doctoral residency – an around-the-clock work ethic with a flair for arts and crafts. It’s not uncommon for us to stay up for 48 hours cramming for a design review, sleep under our studio desk, and burn through hundreds of dollars on cardboard, paper, and glue (not included in tuition).

Any hopes we had freshman year of having a life outside of school have since been reduced to comedic punch lines shared amongst the graduating class.

The secret to our resilience? A compulsive affection for caffeine, a sadistic romance for perfection, and an ego groomed for a lifestyle of imbalance and external validation.

A professor-pleasing mix between Friedrich Nietzsche’s Superman complex and the starving artist syndrome.

After 4 years of binging YouTube tutorials and pandering to the design tastes of professors, our GPA is finally nearing its shelf life. The constant state of burnout felt at school is treated as just another cost of admission to a successful career in design. What many don’t realize is that many of the skills and design standards enforced at school don’t directly align with the expectations of the workforce.

An undergraduate degree may never be able to prepare students for the nuances of succeeding as a design professional in a world that is rapidly shifting. However, design activities dedicated to “learning how to learn” or “pushing the [academic] dialogue” are not valid excuses to deprive students of the tools needed to survive a career as volatile as design. It’s teaching practices like these that cause an imbalance of expertise in the industry and a barrier to entry for students with a broader diversity of design interests.

Looking through the lens of architectural academia, the ability to understand building code, navigate the business of design, or produce construction-ready drawings are treated as rote tasks best reserved for on-the-job learning. The problem is that these seemingly “trivial” tasks make up most of what architects actually do in the field. This technical gap is quickly felt in the field as imposter syndrome creeps in with every task. As a result, the industry has become accustomed to a self-perpetuating culture of design martyrdom and uncompensated work for the sake of learning.

Like many other design programs, we’re taught to overlook the reality of our design decisions for the sake of investigating “big ideas,” each loaded with abstract theory-mongering and pretension design jargon overcrowded with a mouthful of syllables. Although the creative, research-driven eye candy embodies many of the qualities of design that initially got us into this field, it fails to accurately represent what the job of a designer actually becomes after graduation.

It’s time we level the learning field and ground our design education in reality.

Considering most design students don’t intend on pursuing a career in academia, I start to wonder who the curriculum is designed to serve — the students or the professors?👁





# On Being (Oneself)

The “Real,” the lived, and the imposed upon

BY QUINN MCCLURG

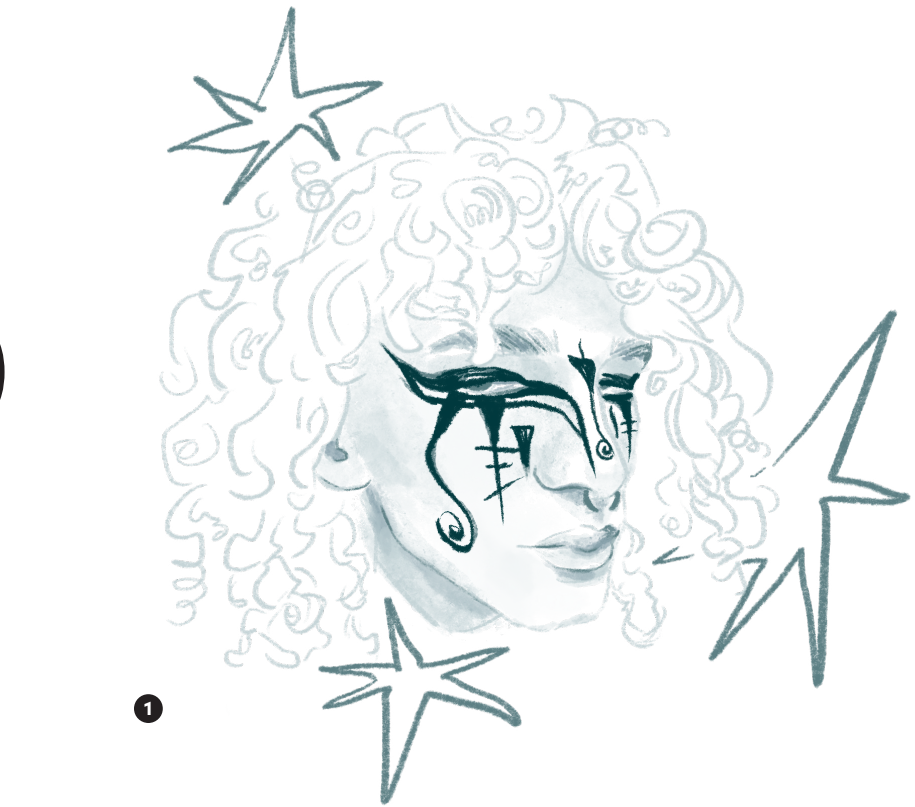
In early 2021, before I was anything I am now, I wrote a phrase in regards to my drawing style: “All I am is scratchy edges and smeared lines.” The longer I’ve lived, the more I’ve come to embody that phrase, manifest in makeup and sense of self.

Odds are you’ve seen me. No, this isn’t some self-aggrandizement or aesthetic self-promotion, but rather more about how I regularly appear. I’m “the nightmare girl,” that “punkish,” “gothish” t-girl with scary, over-the-top makeup (not that I identify with punk, goth, nor aiming to be “over-the-top”).

So why all the makeup and strappy outfits? Truth is, I’m never quite affirmed nor in my body nor “am” to begin with; I just find things that make me feel less recognizable as either male or female, human or inhuman, permanent or impermanent.

This goes a long way back, rooted deep down: I’ve always felt that I exist at the bounds of boundaries, the tearing-in-between of binaries. I don’t want to ever be / be recognized as one thing, for “that thing” is nothing more than what I am at that time.

Consider the Lacanian “Real” (bear with me): beyond the realms of the “Imaginary” (where fantasies are first granted image) and the “Symbolic” (how these fantasies may be enacted in action, art, or language) is the “Real” (the prime, underlying, and driving desire itself); the “Real” escapes actual attainment by any means, for it can never actually exist. For a gambler, this may be the elusive mystery that spends their last cent. For Freud, this may be the never-attainable desired trad-wife mommy “source” one can never return to, merge with, nor breastfeed forever upon. Recently, I have realized the “Real” to be my sense of self.



So how do you desire something that should (ideally) be innate in every human being? Whether it is actually there or not, I have always perceived sense of self as some innate thing-ness, a being-in-itself: a modest, polished stone that sits deep within, informing oneself and one’s actions. Still, I don’t have that; long ago I reached into myself and found absence—it has been the same ever since, no matter how deep I go.

Sometimes I wonder if the emptiness I have labeled “sense of self” is merely just the feeling of being; after all, the act of seeing will not reveal anything more than what is seen, and what is seen / how it is seen is far different than the biological actions of seeing itself.

Regardless, from the perspective of the “Real,” I imagine this elusive sense of self as a book: gradually written day-by-day, never quite finished nor concrete, but something you could be sympathetic to, fed enough experience, affirmation, realization, and socialization. Consider this an optimistic future-projected-self. Still, it’s almost as if I unconsciously reject this selfhood, maybe out of fears of pride, ego, or over-identification.

I do understand that I have internal unconscious consistencies and external unconscious impositions though; I constantly consciously search for them, then reject and mend them. Maybe this is the actual “real,” a lived experience of forever-oscillation, paradoxical pushing and pulling—recognizing the self-desire in the conscious and unconscious both, and actively sustaining

and rejecting both simultaneously. Hell, even my body is a paradox—a woman granted the anatomy and voice of a man, as if I fail to even exist properly. This is all to say I may have made a self out of destroying a tangible sense of self; I live paradoxically because I have to to be content with living at all.

But I have limits upon my memory in the form of several traumatic brain injuries. Many of my favorite people, experiences, and philosophies have been lost indiscriminately to this annihilating and continuously lived trauma; hence why I endlessly all the same stories, just with more convolution. Odds are dissociative mental illnesses don’t help either. This is just to say there’s a strange irony in being very recognizable but rarely recognizing others; being very recognizable but never recognizing yourself.

We return to the beginning: perhaps I present myself as uncategorizable because absence is more familiar—because I am incapable of harboring “self” to begin with. But recently, I have been bolstered by the important of resistance; I desire imposing (at least) confusion upon those who impose normalization upon me—not only because assumptions based on one’s physicality should not be tolerated, but also because I am so regularly confused by the facts that I am something at all, that I am nothing, and that I will continue to be—something-ness or not.

Whatever—maybe just don’t end up like me ;).👁️

# Under Sound and Under The Influence

Prize Horse Album “Under Sound” Release Show at First Avenue

BY JAY WALKER

While waiting in line, a mad man at the bus stop across the street called to me, trying to get my attention. He repeatedly shouted, “White boy! Hey white boy!” I paid him no mind. Entering, it was clear the place was shoulder to shoulder, like a pack of cowboy killers.

Giallo offered something that was great for head thrashin’ and nut blasting. The vocalist sounded like a bull in heat being castrated and fed a steady supply of ipecac, which in the hardcore genre, is ideal. During their set, the mosh pit got especially frisky, with someone flying head first into my gut, resulting in the remains of my Tequila Sunrise to become part of my outfit.

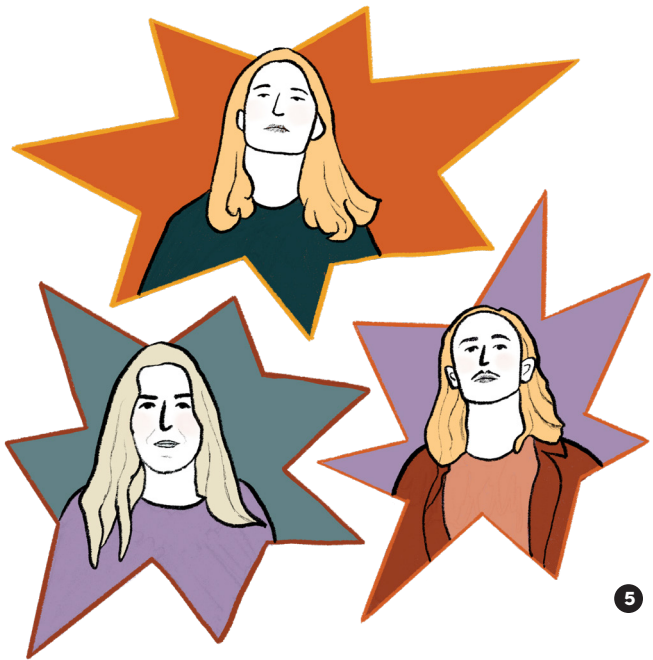
The next group, killusonline, contained a darker, grittier sound from the guitars accompanied by a vocalist filled with moxy and Jesus Christ of Nazareth pummeling away at the drums. Downward, a group from Oklahoma, sounded like someone trying to serenade you in the midst of a NyQuil bender.

Then it was time for the headliner, Prize Horse, to take the stage and play their new album, Under Sound. The second track could have been compared to shredding, a cheese grater against flesh. But it was a pleasant shredding. I could have been in a dream for all I knew. Either by design or audio mishap, the track ended with a dissonant grinding noise. It was nice.

During the titular track, “Under Sound,” the drums rattled sharply, and the guitars became something else entirely, like a set of screaming radiators. The vocalist was injected with an energizing angst. While taking it in, I noticed some goddamned mustachioed vulture doing photography. He was kinda cute. The eighth song was dedicated to Blake, whoever that is.

The rest of their tracks were filled with long waves of hair flying back and forth across the stage, drums being beaten worse than Jeb Bush in 2016, and sounds that bring to mind an ethereal sound, like the distant rumbling of a derelict building collapsing on itself.

Afterwards, somehow, some way, I found myself with a take out box of cheese curds... laying drunk on a stained mattress in some dump. 👁️



# The Challenge

How to balance your artsy side with your college major?

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

Starting college is a challenge in itself. You convince yourself you like this specific set of classes enough to live your entire life reading, writing, and performing things related to that field. You are forced to put aside your real passions to give way to more academically acceptable skills and thoughts. All you have left of what constitutes you and your dream is what people deem as a “hobby.” But sometimes your hobby can tell more about who you are and what you love than whatever you do in college.

My biggest challenge in college is keeping my dream alive. In the morning, I am known by my friends as a journalist (even though I am actually unemployed), but at night, I do what I am most passionate about: electronic music. I have been a “bedroom” music producer since I was 13 and just recently have started DJing for my friends at parties. I wish I had more time to spend on creating uplifting melodies, making new friends, collaborating, and DJing in clubs, but I have to write, write, and write. If I want to maintain my grades, I would fare better by putting a halt to music production, but somehow I am still compelled to create enough content to update social media about my music project. So how do I do it?

That is the challenge. You have to find out what makes you want to stay up all night. You have to feel like the time you spent doing it was worth it instead of a “waste of time.” You have to “feel” it, instead of “work” on it. I believe that what you trade your sleeping hours for is what defines who you are the best. This is how, nine years ago, I found the best definition of myself. Have you found yours? 👁️



## Social Security Card

By Amina Ahmed

When people ask me why I live the way that I do,  
I tell them about my father's signature.

He starts with a big letter K,  
Some scribbles,  
And a large oval around it.  
He finishes with two vertical dots near the end,  
Like he's declaring his existence to the world:  
"I was here."

When people ask me why I live the way that I do,  
I tell them about my social security card.

Beneath that nine-digit number,  
is a long line that reaches from one end of the card to the other.  
SIGNATURE.  
I tell them how that signature starts with a big letter K,  
And not an A.

When people ask me why I live the way that I do,  
I tell them that I am not mine.  
My life does not belong to me.

But when I think about the way that I live,  
I think about how scared he must have been,

How confusing this system is,  
And how nobody told him whose name was supposed to go on that line,  
And how he chose his, willing to be the scape-goat without a second thought.  
Taking all the blame if all else fails.

It usually works.  
The rage subsides like the moon pulling back the tide.

But when it doesn't.  
I think about how much weight a name has,

And how I've been paying a debt I do not owe.  
I think about the craters on my father's face,  
And ponder about what our world would come to  
If the moon had no power over the tide.  
I imagine the destruction the seas would cause,  
Leveling cities and decimating populations.

If I think about it long enough,  
The guilt begins to set in  
And the moon regains its control over the tide again.

Sometimes, I think about how sad the tide must be.  
How simply stretching her arms isn't allowed to be anything less than destruction,  
And how suffocating that must be.  
No one ever thinks about the sacrifices the oceans make for us.  
How they choose to bind their limbs together in discomfort,  
And bow at the Moon's whim.  
Everyone only remembers when the tide loses its temper,  
Despite how rare it is allowed to.

But when I'm not thinking at all,  
And my rage has colored me red,  
Sometimes I think that the destruction of this world is just what this Earth is looking for,  
What it's been craving for.  
Peace and Quiet.

# The Climate Crisis and Migration to the Midwest

*How the climate emergency will continue pushing coastal cities towards climate-resilient ones*

By Alessandra Benitez



We're constantly hearing about and grappling with the effects of climate change, being reminded of how urgently things must change, and just how irreversible it will all be. Yet, while the impendence of doomsday is constantly drilled into our minds, it still feels like a far-off reality for many of us. But it is not.

One of the reasons global warming is such a complex topic is that there is really no way of knowing what the full effects of it will look like, at least at this current moment in time. There is no way of fully predicting to what extent the greenhouse gasses heating up the planet will affect people's lives. However, the research that is present is by no means optimistic for many southern countries and cities, meaning climate change is well on its way to becoming the main cause of mass migration. In 2020, 30 million people migrated due to weather-related disasters, while wildfires in the U.S. displaced more than a million Americans. Certain cities like Duluth have already seen an influx of people moving there to escape the side effects of climate change. But why is Minnesota, especially Minneapolis and Duluth, such an attractive destination when it comes to climate change migration?

Full disclosure, I am not an Environmental Science major, so there are a lot of things about climate change that I don't



know about. As someone who's a liberal arts student, I'm really good at reading about climate change, and pretty bad at understanding the data. But in all seriousness, I have no idea what is going to happen. In the interest of seeking a knowledgeable perspective, I asked Kobe Knettel, current president of the Environmental Student Association, for information about the subject. When it comes to the effects climate change will have on migration, Knettel stated: "In general, it is expected that the southern hemisphere, including populations living near the equator, will experience the most heating— in the sense that some of these areas will be inhabitable. Which pushes these already socioeconomically disadvantaged populations North, specifically [into] the Midwest". To be specific, the Southern Hemisphere endured up to 95% of water loss over the past 2 decades. Water is life, it is impossible to fathom any organisms on Earth being able to survive without fresh water. Around 70% of the human body is made up of water, and it is impossible to survive more than a few days without it. Unfortunately, major global warming effects will affect the amount of water available forever.

The migration to the Midwest is due to a multitude of factors, including access to natural resources like clean water, fresh air, and forests that do a lot in terms of regulating temperatures. Knettel also highlighted the ecological advantages that Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan have because of the multitude of lakes running through these states, since The Great Lakes essentially absorb a lot of heat and act as natural air conditioning for the cities surrounding them. Duluth is a great example of this, and it's why Duluth has become such a popular destination for those displaced due to extreme weather caused by global warming.



Apart from its ecological advantages, Minnesota has also instated policies that will move the state into using more renewable energy and thus reduce the effects of climate change. In October 2019, the Metropolitan Council reviewed and approved Minneapolis 2040, a plan that will be used to guide decision-making that affects our city's long-term future, taking into account the economic and environmental sectors. The plan aims to reduce greenhouse emissions by 80% by 2050 through a series of community support programs for businesses to move into renewable energy. According to the 2040 comprehensive plan, the City of Minneapolis will strive to substantially increase the energy efficiency of buildings by retrofitting existing buildings and improving the design of new buildings. It will also work to accelerate the transition to renewable energy in buildings and transportation. While this is certainly good news, it is important to take into consideration how much a rise in migration from coastal cities will impact the rise in climate change as well. No state, no city, or no country is immune to the side effects of global warming. As Knettel put it, the harsh reality is that the climate is going to continue to warm and also get drier. It is only the places where it will remain the most habitable that will ultimately see the largest increase in population.

In addition to the extreme heat the southern hemisphere has to worry about, the north also has environmental threats that cannot be ignored. Knettel highlighted that as the climate continues to degrade, scientists will find out more and more about what that means for systems that are important in regulating global habitability. For example, the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, which has a huge impact on the climate in the northern hemisphere, is slowing. The AMOC transports heat and nutrients from the tropics to the Northern Hemisphere and across the equator. If it were to collapse—which it can since it's slowing down—it would not only cause a rise of the sea level in coastal areas, but it could also decrease sea level temperatures in the northern Atlantic by 10 degrees, which would then eventually essentially freeze the northern hemisphere.

Climate change is an extremely nuanced topic, but there is no doubt that it is happening and it will affect the whole world exponentially. While Minneapolis and Duluth are certainly more resilient than others and they are implementing plans to keep it that way, climate change is something that the whole world contributes to and thus the whole world will feel its effects. Unfortunately, even those countries or states that don't contribute much to climate change will suffer

the consequences of others' neglect. For example, several places such as New York and Pakistan have had major floods this past summer. Not to mention that it is the middle of February in Minnesota and the weather keeps going up to 60 degrees! This is the scary reality we're living in.

While the future may seem bleak, it's important to not hold your head down so low. It's especially important to consider the amount of pollution that larger corporations generate and can get away with because of the laws that allow it. Just look at 3M or Xcel Energy here in Minnesota, not too far from Minneapolis. Negligence from companies like these is a critical component to advancing climate change exponentially faster than is possible through sole individual consumer choices. Just look at how much nuclear waste Xcel leaked from its Monticello plant in 2023 alone. And let's not forget the Dakota Access Pipeline—which is not only invading native land—it also pollutes by releasing greenhouse gasses and were it to spill it would also contaminate the drinking water surrounding it. It is especially important to hold big companies as well as governments accountable for their actions in order to truly start to make a difference in the topic of climate change. 🌍





# A Laughing Matter

In a world of jesters, is anyone really saying anything?

BY JASON CHANG

In the courts of the kings and queens of old, there was a figure immune from rebuke, whose voice rang through the halls and whose words were never questioned. It was not the monarchs but in fact the jester. These entertainers could get away with saying things most commoners could not—as long as they were funny. This was the origin of the phrase, “jester’s privilege”. They could get away with saying anything because, after all, nothing they said mattered. Who would heed the words of a lowly jester?

Conventionally, this privilege is discussed as a blessing—a haven from consequence and criticism, a get-out-of-jail-free card. After all, why should anyone give too much thought to a joke? Yet, perhaps it is more of a curse in nature. Yes, you can say anything because no one is listening! But you can say anything because no one is listening. The forum to speak freely is not the same as the opportunity to communicate. Disguised behind that veil of alluring safety is the slow, burning realization that no one is truly listening; that your words are given no weight and no mind. It’s the reality of being forced to operate under the assumption that every note and phoneme leaving your mouth is a hollow one, nothing more than meaningless quips made for shallow entertainment and soliciting no deeper cognitive effort.

In the modern age, we can all too often feel like jesters ourselves—our words allowed to flow freely, but our voices dismissed and ignored. In a world where every opinion from every person is broadcast far and wide, our voices can often feel invisible, dispelled without a second thought amongst the

sea of exclamations incessantly battering against our minds. Technology may amplify voices, but with eight billion mouths all clamoring for attention, each individual one is diminished. Certain words are laughed off, taken as nothing more than a ridiculous joke, while other charged remarks are sheltered behind the notion that they were meant to be the same. From fifteen second TikToks to two-hundred-eighty word tweets, everyone talking and nobody listening, leaving us all to bear the jester’s curse.

However, are jesters’ words so meaningless after all? I would disagree. I’ve had some of my most shattering revelations with the credits of some trashy dramedy rolling the background or Bo Burnham serenading me about Pringles cans. In truth, humor is one of the most powerful rhetorical devices of all. From late night satirical talk shows to The Onion, it is the great equalizer, breaking through the mental defenses of Presidents and kindergarteners alike and powerfully potent in its abilities of persuasion. Like a bitter pill encased in sugar, we happily lap it all up, too busy laughing to question the contents wrapped inside. Even aside from argumentation, humor can be a capable tool, accomplishing everything from allowing oppressed groups to reclaim stereotypes (and in doing so, push back against them) to, as recounted by survivors of the Holocaust,

helping victims endure the unimaginable pain of the atrocities committed upon them. A true chameleon of an art, humor can act as a crutch to a sword and everything in between.

Moreover, I cannot help but believe that even the most empty jokes still truly matter. Even the little, meaningless quips stay with me. The repetitive banter with my friends that never gets old; the same joke we’ve made a billion times before, still funny, still eliciting the same joy as the time before and every time before that. The witticism from the shy boy behind me in class that a select few of us heard. A laugh shared with a perfect stranger witness to the same bizarre coincidence, a beauty in a moment I will remember for a lifetime.

Sometimes, in the royal courts, even a jester would go too far. A risky joke that hit a little too close to home to someone a little too important or a statement too thinly veiled, and even a jester’s immunity would run out. But I can’t help imagining that maybe then they would finally be smiling. For better or worse, they knew that their words finally mattered, and they would have the last laugh. 🙄



# There’s an Uneven Bob Underneath My Hijab

Going Rogue

BY AMINA AHMED

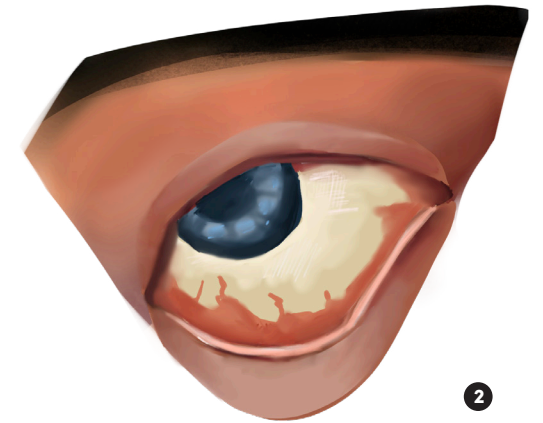
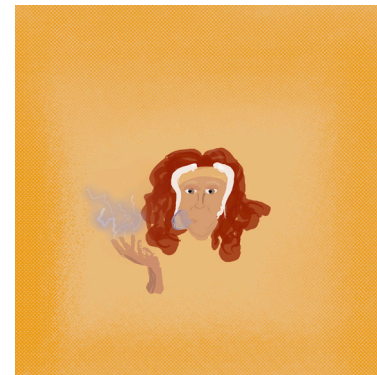
I never understood why our Elementary school teachers told us never to use the word “hate” for the strong meaning it implied. My sentiments were never weak or dull; I felt them deeply and thoroughly that no modest term could accurately convey. I have always hated with a ferocity that deserved the word.

To be fully transparent with you, my biggest gripe with the notion that “hate is a strong word” is the connection to a history of bigotry and prejudice. I refuse to allow white supremacy to wholly usurp the term, because it is entirely possible to “feel intense or passionate dislike” for something other than a human being for their race or ethnicity; the fact that most of society believes otherwise is more concerning to me than the strong connotation of my vocabulary. . . but I digress.

Sometimes I think the reason why I feel my emotions so deeply and drown in them is because I can. It is the simple freedom of choice that appeals to me. I will take in my emotions passionately and fervently because they are my own to feel as I wish. No outside force can will me to feel differently than how I choose to, and I’ve learned how that is an invaluable gift.

In a world that does not guarantee the ownership of oneself, it is imperative to actively challenge it at every chance we receive. Cut your hair in the middle of the night, send that risky text, get that tattoo you’ve been eyeing. Give beauty and social standards the proverbial middle finger. Going rogue is how we take back ownership of ourselves, it is how we remind ourselves that our wants and desires are real, palpable, and deserving to exist in this world.

So I will speak about how much I hate celery and wet socks. I’ll cut my hair in the middle of the night because I’m tired of maintaining it. I honestly don’t know if I’ll send that risky text, but hey, at least that’ll be my own decision too. 🙄



# Cybernetically Made

The youth need better online games, not fifty dollar retinol

BY LAUREN FACENTE

I can confidently attribute a lot of who I am to the unrestricted internet access I had as a kid. Today I understand internet culture almost too well, and engage in aimlessly scrolling through various forms of brain rot whenever boredom strikes. I was a proud and outspoken member of One Direction Tumblr in 2012, and am a survivor of the capitalist mess called “Webkinz.” However, it’s important to consider that in today’s world, being online has a new meaning for a new generation of children.

In today’s age, kids are being exposed to this culture from the moment they can hold a smartphone. Ironically, many of the popular games we played online have since shut down, or now require methods of payment to advance any sort of gameplay. Options for what to do online are somehow more limited now than they were previously for kids. They are harder to keep entertained without an app to scroll, and there is a serious increase in influencers living above their means. As a result, so much of the free content available online seems to be encouraging children to grow up faster, and to have all the newest trendy items. It’s been especially harmful to young girls as they have become a target audience for makeup and skincare. I mean, I have to work up a sense of courage to step into Sephora now due to the mass of young children throwing tantrums in the store. With so much of the internet being a paywall or an unhealthy audience for children, it’s become more difficult to find a safe and age appropriate space for them. It’s hard to imagine what life will look like in the future for these kids growing up on a new form of internet. 🙄





# I Accept My Mistakes!

Often seen as bitter, your mistakes blossom as a part of your invariable self.

BY YVE SPENGLER

I was a mere 12 years old when an eccentric teacher of mine introduced me to the notion that I could never leave my own body.

*I am escapable from everyone but myself.*

This seed was planted dormantly within me, in later years it adapted to increasing self-doubts; the imperceptible growth of lush branches.

The wind disperses me to eight years later, and a girl looks me up and down in the outfit I had so anxiously styled. She frowns. Fear causes a tremor through my body, knowing my outward appearance can never compare with another’s standard. I have so much admiration for actors who make it seem so easy to slip into the role of another, as I myself have no capabilities for this sort of expression. Instead, I write.

I write during nightfall, when tears rain down my swollen eyes because I am reminded of how I cannot elude my physical prison. Because my once strong hold of the moon has slipped and I perilously barrel down to the rapidly approaching earth, yet I am gently caught in the crux of fortified branches. I write because there are complexities hidden underneath the skin for us all.

There is the invariable “you.” You, who cannot be anyone but you, who is not just an undeserving fake of another’s care. You, who truly is authentic and worthy of the love others show you—the care you deserve from yourself. Acceptance of your failures blossoms you into the now rooted, secure version of yourself. Accept yourself for all that you are, because growth from your mistakes has allowed you to survive in harsh seasons of frigid snow.

Now, the leaves of your tree finally extend to catch hold of the livened moonlight, streaming continuous reassurance inwards. You may feel like a mind trapped inside a body, but your mind knows you; isn’t it wonderful to be seen? 🌙

# Lives to Be Lived

With a million possibilities for how your life could unfold, how can you not be consumed with indecision?

BY DEVNA PANDA

Sylvia Plath once famously likened her life to a fig tree branching out before her, the branches symbolizing all of the many ways in which her life might unravel. She went on to reveal how the sheer weight of the decision, of choosing but one of these avenues, overwhelmed her with dread and indecision. When I first came across this analogy, I could hardly believe how much I identified with it. How can one possibly make the decision of which life to live when there are millions of lives to choose from?

The purpose of college is to decide which path we want to pursue. It is only too easy to compare ourselves to others when we see all of the options folding out in front of us. As I solve problems related to drug diffusion and degradation and learn how biological systems can be represented, I watch friends design new products, work publishing internships, and have heated discussions about the mechanism of rhodopsin. When I hear about the disciplines that others have chosen to immerse themselves in, I can almost feel my conviction in my own choices being diluted.

Moreover, when I consider all of the different adventures I want to experience, the acute awareness of how quickly time passes permeates my being. Do I spend my twenties participating in La Tomatina in Buñol and exploring the Himalayan foothills in Darjeeling or completing my medical residency? Do I enlist in the Peace Corps immediately after college or work in industry in a conventional job? This tendency to oscillate between two choices pervades every sphere of my life: should I grab the strawberry or peach flavored Chobani from the fridge? What will each one inherently say about me? As I settle on a choice, I feel a sense of loss, the other possibilities slipping through my fingers.

And yet, ultimately, I have found that the frustration caused by thoroughly deliberating each option often brings more pain than the act of simply making an instinctive decision. Perhaps then, the kindest thing I can do for myself is to try to live with reassurance—my life will unfold as it should and as it must. The choices I make will serve and fulfill me because I am the one who made them. 🌙



# Oscillation

From Self Care to Self Flagellation

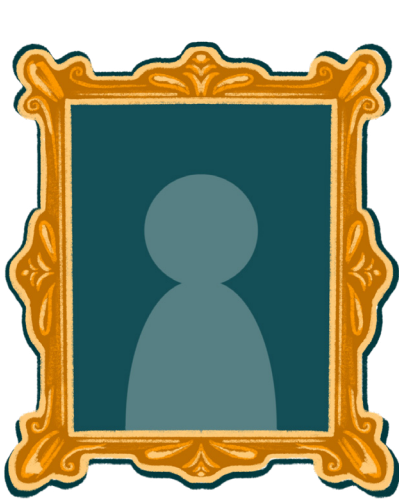
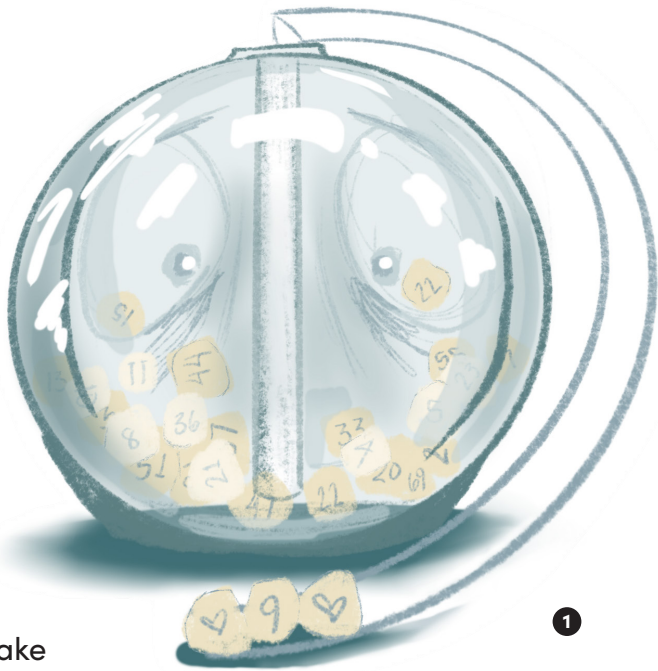
BY GEORGE FASEEMO

Have you ever watched the Powerball lottery drawing on TV? It would come on sometimes when I was a kid and I was always transfixed by one element of these draws: they had these clear spinning orbs filled with dice that enabled them to pull random numbers when they needed them. I always wanted one.

Unfortunately I am now an adult, and I haven’t seen a lotto drawing in years. I also haven’t watched cable TV in years, actually. This is largely because cable now only exists in the homes of old people who have been eaten by their pets, but it’s also because I’m incredibly busy. The conundrum of how to balance this busyness and the question of treating yourself has increased in importance as more people try to cope with schedules that continue to get exponentially busier. This has led some to cycle between two unhappy positions: One: brief periods of overindulgent, somewhat self-destructive hedonism as a form of self-care-based escapism, and two:. an overwhelmed state of self-flagellation and broken self promises.

On a large scale, this problem must be solved on a systemic level—we have a society that doesn’t give people enough space to breathe. But there are personal steps that we can take to have some form of balance, and I am willing to personally endorse a system that uses the Powerball lottery way of doing things.

The way to think of it is as if each realm of life (leisure time, cleaning, etc) is one of the dice in the powerball spinner. Some of these dice need to be permanent, like schoolwork or time with loved ones. But other less urgent issues can be cycled in and out every few weeks. The point here isn’t necessarily to follow this Powerball system—the point is that a stable, balanced, regular schedule is the best way to reduce the stress created by having way too much to do. You should still use the Powerball system though, if for no reason other than its kickass name. 🌙



# Gatekeeping Our Lives

What’s gained from sharing a lie?

BY ASHLEY SUDETA

Starting college is a challenge in itself. You convince Maybe I should transfer to Carlson because I’ve been marketing myself to others my whole life. By tweaking my words I try to make myself impressive, but non-threatening, relatable, but not raw. It’s second nature at this point. Honestly, I’d be surprised if anyone told me they’d never done this. In a time where human connection can be so difficult to achieve, it’s easy to find yourself clawing out for love, doing anything for a chance to keep clinging.

There’s a subconscious art to selling yourself. Frame the good traits just right—it’s important to look competent, but not arrogant. People hate to see others be successful. Gloss over the rough patches with humor because relatability is en vogue and anything that hurts can be turned into a gag. Most importantly, crop out anything uncomfortable that breaks the illusion. People are allowed to know I cried while watching “The Barbie Movie,” but they can’t find out I sobbed during a chemistry exam freshman year.

Whenever something slips through, I feel exposed. I’m like a fresh corpse viewed before the mortician could plug the wounds with wax. This wasn’t meant to be witnessed, you probably wish you could forget it. Don’t watch me fall apart, I’m only making you feel sick. But when I reflect on it, the revulsion is mine, not yours. I’m the one who’s uncomfortable. You’re staying and waiting while I flee.

Our fears tell us more about ourselves than anybody else. Through hiding parts of ourselves, those closest to us are pushed away and our genuine relationships are damaged. We deprive ourselves of opportunities to celebrate victories and be comforted at our lowest. Vulnerability hurts, but it’s necessary to establish the connections we crave. We’re all just people, not characters or brands: we don’t need a PR campaign to be lovable. 🌙



SIX  
REVIEWS



# One Day

David Nicholls, Molly Manners

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

Starring Leo Woodall and Ambika Mod, “One Day” is a television adaptation of the 2009 novel of the same name, written by David Nicholls. If you’re wondering why that sounds familiar, that’s because there’s also an Anne Hathaway film called “One Day”—and yes, that was also based off of the novel and was released in 2011.

I’ll admit, the reason I clicked on the show was half out of curiosity and half because I was surprised to see an Indian woman as a romantic lead—a rarity in western media. And after doing a bit of background research, I found out that Ambika Mod, who plays protagonist Emma Morley, said a similar thing in an interview. Seeing brown women in lead roles—especially romantic ones—is still a scarcity. But Mod is refreshing in her role and brings Emma Morley to life.

Sometimes it felt as though the show dragged, especially considering its source material was previously condensed into a film. However, the show is able to encapsulate more of the novel due to its longer run time. I felt that it did a good job of showing the different years of both Dexter and Emma’s lives, but in its loyalty to its source material, the show seemed to move a bit slower than I would’ve liked.

The most memorable part of the show is definitely its tragic ending. Even if you watch the show knowing how it ends, it does not lessen the blow. I won’t disclose what happens to prevent spoilers, but I will warn any future viewers that it is sudden, so... watch at your own risk. 🕸



# Lisa Frankenstein

Zelda Williams

BY QUINN MCCLURG

Want a simple, heartwarming, and tonally consistent movie to watch with your friends? Me neither!

Directed by Zelda Williams (Robin Williams’ daughter) and written by Diablo Cody (the writer for “Jennifer’s Body”) the plot of “Lisa Frankenstein” follows Lisa Swallows, a perfectly normal, well-adjusted teenager living in 1989. She maximizes her time doing cool girly things like getting electrocuted by tanning beds, doing charcoal rubbings of centuries-old gravestones, and falling in love with performative socialists who wear Friedrich Nietzsche. \*sigh\* she’s just like me. Anyways, thank god there’s a lustful dead nice-guy with a 152 year age gap to set things straight for the rest of the film!

Well, not exactly straight. From start to finish, “Lisa Frankenstein” is one of the most queer- and trans-coded movies I have recently had the pleasure of seeing, and is, as a result, extremely off-putting, affirming, unpredictable, and tonally inconsistent (all hallmarks of the best queer media)—I suspect these variables lead to the movie’s underperformance and polarization, but also its quick cult status.

Viewers are sure to fall in love with this film’s intricate costuming, satisfyingly smooth cinematography, and punchy color palettes no matter how much they actually enjoy the content of the film. The humor is perfect, cutting surprisingly cynically but subversively, and the nostalgia-bait (remember, set in 1989) is usually minimal but cleverly subtle, serving somewhat as a low-key love letter to other contemporary camp films of the 80s.

Whatever—it’s worth a watch whether you enjoy it or not. Especially considering “Argylle,” the new “Mean Girls,” and the despised “Madame Web,” “Lisa Frankenstein” might be the only recent cinema worth choosing. 🕸



# South Africa

Anjunadeep

BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

On Feb. 28, the downtempo/deep house music label Anjunadeep released their seven song-compilation album from South African producers and singers. The songs contained within capture perfectly the essence of what is known as Mzansi House—when jazz, traditional South African music, contemporary dance and pop merge together. With ethereal and inspiring beats to vibe with, this album will surprise you.

The compilation starts with the track “B27” from Nqamakwe-born platinum & award winning producer Karyendasoul. “B27” is a song that elevates your state of mind, driving it to places only you can imagine by harboring very vague melodies but an attention-grabbing climax. It is followed by “Andikayeki,” a song from Johannesburg-based producer Heavy-K and former “The Voice: South Africa” contestant Ami Faku. Sung in isiXhosa—one of the languages spoken in the country—the song tells the story of an individual who faced numerous challenges and overcame adversities in their life. Its distinct 3-step beat reinforces the uniqueness of the song, while its beautiful composition makes it such a joy to listen.

There is one song in this compilation I believe to be different from all others. My consumption of Downtempo house tracks—known for their calm and chill melodies, and their shy drums—is very limited. I listen to those songs when I want inspiration to come to me, to elicit a cathartic experience and motivation. The song that made me feel the closest to this feeling was “Solitude,” by Pretoria-born producer Cornelius SA and organic deep house DJ Sebee. “Solitude” feels like a barren landscape filled with our imagination, a canvas for us to paint our own picture, a place where we want to lay down and gaze while the wind carries us away from our problems.

In fact, if you are looking for a path to bliss, away from your worries, this compilation is for you. 🕸



# Stardust

Crystal Skies

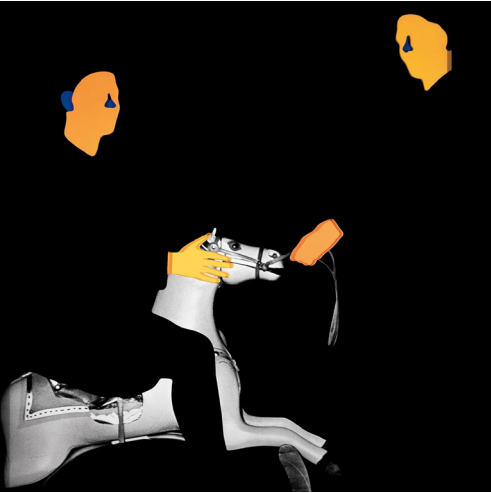
BY GABRIEL MATIAS CASTILHO

Crew...What. An. Album. On Feb. 23, Britian Holcomb and Aaron Dawson—known by their stage name of Crystal Skies—released their version of a supernova in the form of a 10-track compilation. In all honesty, I haven’t listened to an album that is at the same time extremely colorful, melodic and powerful, since Au5’s Bridges Between album (released in October last year). I have been craving a curated melodic dubstep compilation for quite some time, and I am so happy to announce Crystal Skies delivered it to us. The experience is so ethereal it feels wrong to put it into words, but here it goes.

The album—I mean, the experience—opens up with “Growing Pains,” a collaboration with Utahn artist Soundr that explodes (just like a dying star) in a myriad of ethereal emotions. The artists even experiment with sounds from other varieties of dubstep, such as color bass (fitting, huh?). It is followed by the featured song of the album, “Stardust,” a collaboration with award-winning singer & Massachusetts-born HALIENE. The album’s homonym track initially adopts a trance-driven approach, but quickly shows its true colors with a swift discharge of energy and melody when it breaks down.

It is hard to pick a favorite track from this compilation. My two runner-ups are “Farewell,” with Seattle-raised singer KnownAsNat, and “Nirvana,” a collaboration with LA-based artist AMIDY—both are insanely radiant tracks. But if I had to put one on a pedestal, I would have to choose Crystal Skies’ collaboration with Grammy-nominated singer Luxtides, “Other Side”. The kaleidoscopic drop of the song resonates with the intrigue-ridden lyrics so well, it feels like a lyric by itself. One can easily get flabbergasted by the constant breaks in the melody during the drop, which are SUCH A JOY TO LISTEN.

This album is the immediate proof that colors can become an auditory experience. 🕸



# Loss of Life

MGMT

BY MARIE RONNANDER

Loss of Life is MGMT’s fifth studio album, and, in my opinion, the hardest to digest. A far cry from their famous Y2K synth, each song off LOL is pensive with carefully crafted odes to nihilism. Yet, despite the despair and mistrust coating the melodies, there is an intense and profound hope that the world is innately good.

The album opens with “Loss of Life (Part 2)” a spoken word voice reminiscent of Pink Floyd’s Dark Side of The Moon –Intensely moody and observant, and perhaps even a little manic. The speaker claims to know the answers to the mysteries of life, such as why a woman is affectionate or why cows have horns. There’s this looming sense that every earthly experience, from life to death, is connected.

My favorite, “Dancing in Babylon,” portrays mature love with poignant beauty. The song is a duet with Christine and the Queens with a sparkling piano and electric eighties backline. There’s a gush of hope behind the singer’s words, “I want to tell everyone I know, I love you,” yet both describe love with a deeply distrustful perspective. This adds to the ever present theme in LOL that growing up is chaotic and grim, but despite this, hope keeps our dreams alive. Hope keeps us alive.

Listening to this album doesn’t induce a rush of dopamine that the duo’s famous songs like “Kids” and “Time to Pretend” floods my body with. Rather, they addressed my anxiety about the inevitable entropy of life in an ethereal woosh of electro chimes and retro vocals. Tough love is hard to digest, but sometimes you need it more than that rush of dopamine. 🕸



# Madame Web

S.J. Clarkson

BY JACOB NELSON

Now, I’m not clairvoyant or anything like Madame Web is but I can and can’t foresee why this movie has failed so hard in the box office.

A flashback to the Peruvian Amazon in 1973 reveals an extremely pregnant Constance (Kerry Bishé) searching for a rare breed of spider that’s known for its healing properties. Although the pacing of the movie is blissfully breezy, “Madame Web” was a game of cat and mouse. Cassie (Dakota Johnson) discovers that she can see the future—allowing for the re-living of events with multiple chances to get it right many times—which makes way for what could have been an interesting plot.

Now it isn’t Cassie’s impatience as a constantly on-the-go paramedic who must become the reluctant protector of these annoying teens: shy Julia (Sydney Sweeney) bookish Anya (Isabella Merced) and rebellious Mattie (Celeste O’Connor) that bogs it down. In fact, it was the ignorant and uninteresting villain with a weak character arc and lesser motive. In addition, Madame Web’s thread to her web falls short with young spider women heroines by limiting their hero identities to a single recurring night-mare action scene reduced to 5 minutes. They don’t really get origin stories for these three at all in the movie nor do they acquire their powers or costumes in this story. Instead, it’s the big, abrupt, noisy action sequences combined with an endless defenseless chase that makes it spiral even further. Not to mention her unhinged press tour lying about knowing a single Tom Holland “Spider-Man” film and her being allergic to limes – lime queen! 🕸





# Brother Bird

BY SHANNA SIVAKUMAR

**Brother Bird is the musical name for Nashville-based singer-songwriter Caroline Swon. She’s been on tours across America and on NBC’s “The Voice” and boasts a gorgeous discography. Her latest studio album, “another year,” was released just a few days ago, on March 8th, and I got to sit down with her and talk about her artistry.**

**👁️: What’s the meaning behind the album title, “another year”?**

**Caroline:** I struggled with that quite a bit. I think the overall theme of the album is just— I wrote it from a pretty stagnant place, both in a personal way and in my career— I just felt like I was sort of... stuck in a lot of ways and I think “another year” just kind of felt like the most monotonous and best way to [describe the feeling]. It kind of feels like— I don’t know— purgatory? And that’s just kind of what I landed on. I went through [laughs] I had like 10 notes of potential titles for the album. I went completely mad with it—I was like, why are you overthinking it? [laughs]

**👁️: What does your creative process behind a song look like?**

**C:** It kind of changes all the time. It depends on if I’m working on a song from the beginning with someone else, because I do— I love collaborating

with people— but I like writing my lyrics alone, because it is usually really personal to me and I’ve realized that I write pretty subconsciously. A lot of times, I’m sitting down writing a song by myself which is— I feel like that’s kind of how the majority of my songs start. I’ll just kind of like strum on my guitar, find a melody that I find moving, and I’ll literally just start speaking gibberish— words that don’t make any sense— and I’ll latch onto some sort of phrasing or something that sounds nice or appealing to me— and then it’s weird, it kind of takes shape gradually? Which, writing that way, it’s hard when you’re co-writing with someone, ‘cause I’m like, in my own universe. But yeah, I kind of prefer it that way, honestly. That’s sort of why a lot of my songs mean different things through time? I’ll even discover the meaning, like years later. It’s kind of like— the lyrics know something you aren’t aware of at the time, which might sound weird, but yeah, that’s kind of my process.



**👁️: What was the inspiration behind your new album, “another year”?**

**C:** So I made it with my buddy— his name is Owen Lewis— and he produced the record. It was... I think it was 2021? And I just released my first full length record as Brother Bird— it’s called “gardens”— and he hit me up. We had some mutual friends here in Nashville—some artist friends—and we just kind of wanted to see if we worked well together. And we were both into what the other was doing creatively and yeah we just started booking sessions and I had all these songs that I had just kind of been writing. And I wasn’t really writing for a record, I was just kind of... making stuff, and yeah. We were probably like— it wasn’t until we were about six or seven songs in and we were like, “Are we making an album? It feels that way.” So we didn’t really start out thinking that we were making an album... whereas now, I’m making an album right now. I’m sort of starting whatever the third record will be, which sounds psychotic, [laughs] but *this* is an album. But that [another year] was kinda like— I’m making stuff. And I think, thematically, it all goes together because it’s very personal to me, and it’s very much a timestamp of what I was going through at the time— fresh out of covid— very... I don’t know... like a pretty grim place.

**👁️: Where did the name “Brother Bird” come from?**

**C:** That took— oh my god— I had so many sheets on my phone of band names and monikers [laughs] ‘cause every name is kinda stupid, I mean every name is so dumb until it’s like, a name, and you’re like, “okay, yeah, that makes sense.” But I was so in my head about it. But at the time, I had this self-titled EP [written] and a lot of my lyrics [in general] are about my brother, especially on that record. And “bird”... I don’t know, my family has a thing with birds [laughs]. Ummm, we’re bird people! [laughs] And it just kind of felt like the coolest thing to go with.

**👁️: What inspired you to make music?**

**C:** I’ve always loved music but I didn’t really look at it as a career choice by any means until I was about nineteen. I had a very short time on “The Voice” which was in... 2012 and 2013, which was so crazy. And I was super pessimistic about the whole thing— I was like, “there’s no way in hell I’m gonna be on TV, because why would I be? I have no experience.” I was always very, like, closeted about making music— I just like to do it. And I come from a very educationally-driven family, so it’s like, I didn’t know anyone who was pursuing any art form. Everyone’s like, “that’s a hobby.” So then I did. I got on the show and then some doors opened where I was making a living and I ended up... I withdrew from college. I was going to KU— it was

my very first semester— and I was like 2 weeks in when I left. I remember, my dad was like, “You can do this, but you *absolutely* have to swear to me that you will go back to school.” And I was like, “I totally will! I’m not even going to make it that far, it’s just like, the chance of a lifetime.” I took it, and I got on tours. I was like a road rat for years and years, just didn’t even have a place. I didn’t move to Nashville until I think like a year and a half after the show wrapped up just cuz I was just everywhere, so yeah, I just kept going. I never went back to school, which sometimes I think, “maybe I should’ve gone back.” [laughs] But yeah, I just kept going and that’s how I started my career.

**👁️: What musical artists inspire your music?**

**C:** Oh my god, millions. So many. I have an insane amount. I’ve been fortunate enough to become friends with the guys from Manchester Orchestra, this rock band, and they’re like mentors, brothers, homies... family at this point. I love them so much. And I learn so much [from them] all the time. And Kevin Define— who’s also very much under that umbrella— I’ve just been so lucky to learn from them. Even as a kid, I would cover their songs on YouTube and I was always so blown away by their lyrics and musicality. I just thought it was the coolest thing in the world. And getting to work with them is just the most coolest, biggest, full-circle moment. Yeah I would definitely go with them, since I am constantly learning from them. I’m getting to work with them on a lot of side projects this year— and hopefully just forever.





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